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Emergency Action Alert

Killings Explode in East Timor

The situation in East Timor is deteriorating rapidly, as a result of paramilitary violence armed and supported by the Indonesian army. Over a hundred East Timorese civilians have been murdered in the last two weeks, and the UN-mediated peace process is in danger. More people are being killed than at any time since the 1991 Santa Cruz Cemetery massacre, and the spiral of military-initiated violence shows no sign of abating.

Although U.S. government policy and media coverage on East Timor have improved since 1991, there is much more that they must do to help the East Timorese. ETAN is sending this special mailing to our 9,000 members to urge you to take action to end the killing, and to provide the facts you need to persuade your neighbors and your government that this violence can and must be stopped now.

Our collective effort *will* make a difference!

National Call-in Days: April 29 and May 3

Contact your Congressional Representative and Senators, the State and Defense Departments and the Indonesian government to demand:

- A halt to all U.S. arming and training of Indonesia's military. Ask your Representative to support a bill about to be introduced in the House, in addition to H.R.1063 on military training.
- Strong, unified U.S. economic, diplomatic and political pressure on Indonesia to disarm and disband the paramilitaries and withdraw troops prior to the planned July ballot consultation. Your Senators should support legislation about to be introduced in the Senate.
- An immediate, ongoing U.N. presence in East Timor to protect human rights and monitor troop withdrawals and the disbanding of the militias.
- Arrest and trial of the paramilitary leaders for murder, incitement and other crimes, rather than continuing Indonesia military support.

Please call, fax or email as many as you can, starting from the top.

Secretary of Defense William Cohen: 703-692-7100, fax 703-697-9080

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, 202-647-5291 fax: 202-647-6434, secretary@state.gov

U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan: 212-963-5012, fax 212-963-2155, ecu@un.org

Your Senators and Representative. Congressional switchboard: 202-224-3121

Indonesian embassy in Washington: 202-775-5200 fax: 202-775-5365

Indonesian mission to the United Nations: 212-972-8333, fax 212-972-9780

Indonesian President B.J. Habibie: habibie@ristek.go.id

Also contact your local media, human rights, religious and community groups, and anyone else who can help convey this urgent message.

Background

Indonesia's invasion and occupation of East Timor has resulted in the deaths of over 200,000 people—one-third of the pre-1975 population. Despite strong resistance from the East Timorese and growing international pressure, Indonesia refused to withdraw for more than 22 years. But with the ouster of long-time dictator Suharto in May 1998, Jakarta's desire to hold onto East Timor began to erode.

In the following month, facing political instability, economic collapse, and intense international scrutiny, the Habibie government announced that it would offer the East Timorese "special autonomy." Under the plan, East Timor would run many of its internal affairs, while Jakarta would control foreign affairs, the monetary system, and military matters. More importantly, the autonomy plan would maintain East Timor's status as part of Indonesia. While far short of what the East Timorese and the United Nations had been demanding, this was the first time that Jakarta would even discuss East Timor's political status.

The Birth of the Paramilitaries

Mass demonstrations quickly made it clear that most East Timorese rejected integration into Indonesia and demanded their right to self-determination. Simultaneously, elements of the Indonesian military (ABRI) opposed autonomy, seeing it as a precedent for disaffected regions within Indonesia proper and possibly opening the door to East Timorese independence. Working with threatened violence and cash incentives, ABRI began to organize Indonesian settlers and pro-integration East Timorese into "civilian militias," equipping them with hundreds of weapons.

The behavior of these militias belies the populist imagery evoked by their ABRI masters. The paramilitary death squads have conducted a campaign of terror against East Timorese with pro-independence sympathies, killing scores and displacing over 20,000 internal refugees. Paramilitary violence has long been a tactic in Indonesia's 23-year war of conquest, but it has intensified exponentially during 1999. This April, ABRI's hired thugs reached even greater depths.

The Latest Wave of Terror

On April 5, the ABRI paramilitary groups attacked defenseless villagers near the town of Liquiça, slaying at least four and burning down ten houses. The following day, Indonesian soldiers and paramilitaries attacked refugees on the grounds of the Liquiça Catholic church where 2,000 East Timorese fleeing such violence had sought sanctuary. According to Father Rafael dos Santos and Bishop Carlos Ximenes Belo, co-recipient of the 1996 Nobel Peace Prize, soldiers and paramilitaries attacked the refugees, causing many to flee into the church and the priest's home. Soldiers then fired tear gas into the buildings. As the refugees ran out, paramilitaries shot them and hacked them with machetes, killing at least 50 people, according to local human rights monitors.

In Dili, the capital, the violence started on Saturday, April 17 when the Indonesian-appointed governor and senior military officers joined a paramilitary-organized rally. After the rally, 1,500 paramilitaries rampaged through the city, attacking passers-by and specific targets. They destroyed the offices of Yayasan HAK, a human rights organization, and *Suara Timor Timur*, East Timor's only remaining newspaper.

Most of the killing took place in the home of Manuel Carrascalão, a prominent independence advocate, where 126 displaced villagers had sought refuge. Paramilitaries surrounded and fired into his home and then entered the compound, killing Carrascalão's teenage son and more than a dozen defenseless refugees.

The seeming paradox is that the violence is occurring during unprecedented flexibility on the part of the Indonesian government. In January, Habibie declared that he would grant independence to East Timor if its people rejected Indonesia's offer of autonomy. And UN-mediated negotiations between Indonesia and Portugal (still legally the administering power of the territory) have made significant progress. Jakarta has even agreed to allow the United Nations to conduct a popular vote on autonomy, tentatively scheduled for July.

ABRI in Control

But the Indonesian military and their minority of East Timorese collaborators are obstructing the process. They know that a free vote will overwhelmingly reject Indonesia's rule. By fomenting paramilitary terror, ABRI is telling the people that refusal to remain part of Indonesia will result in hell on earth.

Some speculate that ABRI intends to make the territory ungovernable to scuttle the planned vote on autonomy. Others believe that ABRI, realizing that it will eventually have to withdraw, is simply trying to punish the population. Finally, some fear that "pro-integration" forces aim to partition East Timor, creating a pro-Indonesian enclave in the western border area where the paramilitaries have been most active. Indeed, Indonesia's puppet governor recently proclaimed "If necessary, we'll split the country in two—one part independent and one part integrated."

While the growing violence contradicts Indonesia's stated policies, Jakarta refuses to take action to stop it and denies that ABRI is involved. Instead, the government claims that there is a civil war between autonomous groups of "pro-integration" East Timorese and those who support independence. But there is little question that the paramilitaries and the accompanying violence would evaporate without ABRI's backing. Indeed, the military simply watched in Dili on Saturday as their paramilitaries attacked, exchanging "high-fives" with paramilitaries and giving them cigarettes and water.

The Indonesian government blames the intensifying violence on a popular reaction against a supposed "declaration of war" by jailed East Timorese resistance leader Xanana Gusmão. Following the April 5 attack in Liquiça, Gusmão modified the unilateral cease-fire by the East Timorese guerrilla army (FALINTIL), telling them to protect the civilian population in East Timor. Rather than constituting a "declaration of war," Gusmão's directive was a response to widespread calls from the East Timorese population for FALINTIL to provide some safety from the paramilitary terrorists. But despite Gusmão's call, FALINTIL has largely refrained from attacking the paramilitaries, probably because the guerrillas fear that such actions will only invite more violence by ABRI and its agents against civilians. Last week, Gusmão clarified his position, saying that a cease-fire is still in effect except for self-defense.

The ABRI death squads have drawn up a list of 275 activists they plan to eliminate to "clean" East Timor of pro-independence sentiment. They have also threatened to assassinate Bishop Belo, and to spread their violence throughout East Timor and even to Jakarta, 1200 miles away.

Unless Western governments, especially the United States, quickly rein in their allies in Jakarta's military establishment, such threats will be realized and ABRI's paramilitaries will kill hundreds more. But if Washington and its allies do act, and let Jakarta know in no uncertain terms that there will be a high price to pay for continued state terrorism, East Timor can reclaim the progress of the last several months and continue down the road toward self-determination.

United States responsibility

The United States government has been intimately involved since the 1975 invasion of East Timor, which occurred one day after President Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger visited Jakarta and gave Indonesian dictator Suharto the go-ahead. During the height of the killing in the 1970's, the United States supplied 90% of the weapons Indonesia used in East Timor, and arms sales continue to this day.

Grassroots opposition to U.S.-Indonesia military collaboration grew in the wake of the November 12, 1991 Dili Massacre. ETAN was formed, and in 1992 we persuaded Congress to ban military aid to Indonesia under the IMET training program, which is still barred by Congress. Last year, ETAN and others revealed that U.S soldiers have gone to Indonesia numerous times each year, teaching courses in psychological operations, urban warfare, sniper and demolition tactics, etc. Graduates of these courses undoubtedly utilize these skills to organize and train the paramilitary death squads in East Timor. As a result of public and Congressional outcry, this program (JCET) was suspended a year ago. The Pentagon would like to start it up again.

Last month, 51 Congresspeople introduced H.R.1063, the "International Military Training Transparency and Accountability Act," which bans all U.S. military training for Indonesia and other countries for which Congress has barred IMET. The bill is gathering co-sponsors as it moves through the legislative process.

Since 1993, public pressure has forced Congress and the State Department to cancel numerous U.S. weapons sales to Indonesia, although some persist. Two warplane deals were blocked, and currently Indonesia is not allowed to purchase small arms, riot-control equipment, helicopter-mounted weaponry or armored vehicles from the United States. Furthermore, all transfers of lethal weaponry since 1997 carry the understanding that they will not be used in East Timor. Nevertheless, the U.S. provided Indonesia with over $100 million in weaponry last year.

The United States has finally supported East Timor's right to self-determination, after accepting "de facto" integration for 22 years. Last July, the Senate unanimously endorsed a U.N.-supervised referendum, and the House followed a few months later. When President Habibie finally accepted a form of this idea in January, the State Department expressed its support. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright visited East Timorese resistance leader Xanana Gusmão in March, emphasizing U.S. support for the process leading toward a referendum. Albright also urged Indonesia to disarm its paramilitaries and reduce troop levels in East Timor as confidence-building measures.

After the killings at the Catholic church in Liquiça on April 5-6, Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth went to Jakarta, where he conveyed U.S. concern at the increase in paramilitary violence. Roth's message was weakened, however, by the Jakarta visit of Admiral Dennis Blair, Commander in Chief of U.S. forces in the Pacific, the previous week. Blair conveyed "no special message" to General Wiranto, presumably reiterating the Pentagon's desire to resume unrestricted cooperation with ABRI.

The Indonesian government chose to disregard this mixed message, and allowed its military and their paramilitaries to strike terror into the heart of Dili on April 17, the day after Roth left Jakarta. The upsurge in violence in East Timor following the departure of a high-level U.S. official from Jakarta was eerily reminiscent of December 7, 1975. Although Roth's message was different from Kissinger's, and Habibie has replaced Suharto, East Timorese are still dying.

Throughout 1999, members of Congress have written to Secretary Albright, President Clinton, and President Habibie urging a reduction in Indonesia's troop levels in East Timor and disarmament of the paramilitaries. In the wake of the recent upsurge in paramilitary violence, a bill is being introduced into the House of Representatives to freeze all U.S.-Indonesia military cooperation until Indonesia has dismantled the paramilitaries, and a similar resolution will be considered by the Senate. These bills are unnumbered as of this writing, but urge your legislators to contact Representative Patrick Kennedy or Senators Russell Feingold and Patrick Leahy to offer support.

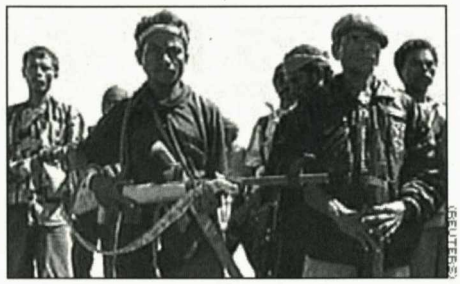
Washington must tell Jakarta in no uncertain terms that continued violence in East Timor is unacceptable. The U.S. government has considerable leverage with Indonesia's military – and it must be used now!

"We do not have NATO smart bombs that too often hit the wrong target. We do not have sophisticated stealth planes. But we have the power of the world citizenry; we are humanity's conscience. We owe it to the East Timorese who have lost their lives, to our relatives and friends murdered in cold blood. So I appeal to all to help in this fight for justice."

East Timorese leader José Ramos-Horta
1996 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate
April 19, 1999

Help ETAN keep working

The East Timor *Action* Network is pulling out all stops to respond to the current crisis. We're bringing survivors of paramilitary terror to testify in Washington, organizing demonstrations all over the United States, mobilizing our grassroots network to pressure Washington and Jakarta, and working closely with our contacts in the State Department and Congress to forge effective U.S. action. All of this takes money – this mailing alone will cost over $3,000. *Please send an emergency gift today!*



Paramilitaries en route to April 17 massacres.

Resources

License to Kill is a compelling 45-minute video documentary on paramilitary violence in East Timor. First broadcast on March 19 by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, the film interviews paramilitary leaders who speak candidly about their relationships with ABRI. The documentary vividly shows the paramilitaries as extensions of the Indonesian military apparatus, making clear that the purported "civil war" is simply intensified ABRI-sponsored violence against unarmed civilians. The video, an excellent organizing tool, is available from ETAN for $12 postpaid.

Yayasan Hak (a key East Timorese human rights organization, whose offices were destroyed by paramilitaries last weekend) recently published an excellent 8-page report "*Terror, Violence and Intimidation: ABRI and the Pro-integration Militia in East Timor*" covering the first three months of 1999, and puts out additional reports as events develop. If you would like a packet of their well-researched materials, send $2 to ETAN or email to hakreport@etan.org.

ETAN's web site http://etan.org includes updated information about the volatile situation and what you can do about it. For even more current news, send a blank email message to info@etan.org for an automatic reply describing internet mailing lists on East Timor.

Indonesian riot squad 'took part in massacre'

Sydney Morning Herald, April 9, 1999

By Lindsay Murdoch

Indonesian security forces took part in the massacre of more than 25 unarmed East Timorese villagers on Tuesday and were not just looking on as previously reported, says a Catholic priest.

Father Rafael dos Santos said on Wednesday that only Timorese-born members of an Indonesian riot squad carried and used high-powered automatic rifles during the massacre at his house and church in the coastal town of Liquiça, 40 kilometres west of the capital.

Yesterday, he said the riot police, Indonesian soldiers and members of a Jakarta-backed paramilitary group stormed his house and started shooting people who had taken refuge there. "It's called murder," the bearded priest said in Dili.

Priests and survivors claim that villagers sought refuge in the century-old Liquiça church after the targeted killing of four accused pro-independence supporters in the town on Monday.

Father Rafael, who is prepared to testify before an impartial inquiry into the killings, said the attackers also tried to kill him and he was lucky to be alive. He said he managed to escape by first hiding behind a wall, and then a homemade rifle failed to fire when an attacker pointed it at him at point-blank range and pulled the trigger.

Meanwhile, an East Timorese human rights group claims that 52 people were slaughtered in the attack and their bodies possibly thrown into a nearby lake or into the sea.

The head of the Catholic Church in East Timor, Bishop Carlos Belo, said he had received a letter from the East Timor military commander, Colonel Tono Suratman, saying 25 people had been killed in the attack in the worst violence in the former Portuguese territory since the 1991 massacre of hundreds of mourners at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili.

But military officials in Jakarta claimed that only five people were killed after pro-independence supporters provoked members of the Jakarta-backed Besi Merah Putih (Red and White Iron) paramilitary group.

Colonel Suratman, who flew to a Besi Merah Putih rally near East Timor's border with West Timor yesterday, told foreign journalists there would be an investigation but declined further comment.

The rally was one of several organised by pro-integration groups as a show of strength in response to a call on Monday by the pro-independence resistance leader Xanana Gusmão for his supporters to launch a popular insurrection against Indonesian-backed paramilitary groups blamed for the escalating violence. While Gusmão's call for his supporters to take up arms increased tensions in East Timor it may also put him back in Jakarta's maximum security jail.

Indonesia's Justice Minister, Mr. Muladi, was quoted by the *Media Indonesia* newspaper yesterday as saying that if Gusmão continues to make "unhelpful" statements "it is not impossible that we will return him from house arrest to Cipinang prison."

On April 19, Muladi summoned Gusmão. After a 35-minute meeting, Muladi agreed there had been no call for war against Jakarta: "It appears that there was a misunderstanding."

Gusmão "explained that my statement was not an incitement to war against Indonesia but just for self defence, and this has been misinterpreted," and Muladi concurred, saying "self defense anywhere cannot be stopped. It is a human right." Nevertheless, the Indonesian military persists in blaming pro-independence forces for rampant paramilitary violence.

Dili, East Timor
Sunday, April 18, 1999

For a good part of the afternoon yesterday, we heard the shooting from our house. This morning, we had an Easter celebration for children. After the Mass, we scheduled organized games and prizes and snack; It was supposed to be over at 12:30. However, at 10:00 the streets were already emptying and fear was beginning to settle in again, since yesterday the shooting started shortly before noon. So the priest said, "Let's call it quits at 11:00 so the children will be home before noon."

Ok, so at 11:00 we were sending off the children with their bread and ice candy and prizes, all happy and smiling. Then all of a sudden, from the streets, they came running back to the Church! Panic!!! Four big trucks full of soldiers passed by. So in the end, I took small groups back and forth from the Church to their neighborhoods. Everyone is terrified at this point, especially since now there is really no place you can run to for safety. (The Liquica incident that took place in the Church proved that.)

We have received some people at our house who feel more tranquil dying in a convent than in their homes. (Does this give you some indication as how the people are getting desperate? They're just waiting to be killed. What else can they do? They are mostly women and children. They have no guns or weapons with which to defend themselves. They don't even have the men around to defend them.) Don't give up on the prayers please. It's the only thing we've got at this point. This morning I went to confession, because I realized that we're not really sure what will happen from this point on. If the international community doesn't help out, a lot of people will die here. It's only half an island, I know. However, as Bishop Belo said once, "Even the smallest of creatures has the right to live."

A Catholic nun in East Timor

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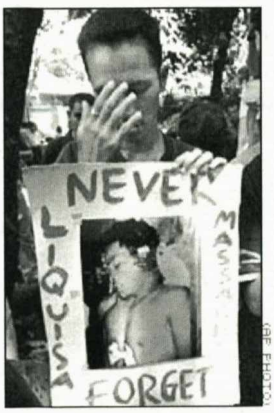

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